

Message Text

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PAGE 01 GABORO 01148 211056Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----211102Z 122239 /16

P 210850Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9951
INFO AMEMBASSY DARESSALAAM PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L GABORONE 1148

EXDIS

FROM LOW

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR US UK RH BC
SUBJECT: CONSULTATIVE GROUP MEETING WITH BOTSWANA FOREIGN
MINISTER

1. GRAHAM AND I, TOGETHER WITH BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER,
CALLED ON BOTSWANA FOREIGN MINISTER MOGWE WHO HAD JUST
RETURNED FROM MAPUTO. GRAHAM OUTLINED OBJECTIVES OF
CONSULTATIVE GROUP, OUR PLAN OF ACTION AND
MINIMUM BASIC PRINCIPLES OF CONSTITUTION WHICH WE HOPED COULD BE
NEGOTIATED. I ADDED THE PURPOSE OF US PARTICIPATION AND ROLE
WE SAW OURSELVES PLAYING, AS WELL AS A NOTE OF APPRECIATION
FOR THE CONSTRUCTIVE POSITION WHICH BOTSWANA HAS TAKEN
IN EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT IN RHODESIA.

2. MOGWE STARTED OUT BY INDICATING MILD SURPRISE AT THE
ARRANGEMENTS TO MEET WITH MUZOREWA IN GABORONE BUT
WENT ON TO ASSURE US OF BOTSWANA'S SUPPORT FOR THE EFFORT.
THERE FOLLOWED A CONVERSATION FOR ABOUT 45 MINUTES
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PAGE 02 GABORO 01148 211056Z

DURING WHICH MOGWE, MINISTER OF INFORMATION KWELAGOB, AND
SECRETARY TO THE PRESIDENT JOE LEGWAILA, WHO WERE
ALSO PRESENT, ASKED A SERIES OF QUESTIONS ABOUT OUR PLANS
AND THOUGHTS IN PURSUING THE CONSULTATIONS. BOTH
GRAHAM AND I WERE IMPRESSED BY THEIR OBVIOUS INTEREST,
POSITIVE APPROACH AND SYMPATHY FOR THE UNDERTAKING.
THEY SEEMED ENCOURAGED BY THE WAY WE ARE PLANNING TO

GO AT THE TASK; THE BILATERAL CONSULTATIONS; PRIORITY
GIVEN TO A CONSTITUTION; CARETAKER RATHER THAN INTERIM
GOVERNMENT CONCEPT; AND BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE CONSTITUTION.
MOGWE SEEMED TO FEEL THAT IT WAS MUZOREWA
WHO HAD BEEN THE CHIEF OBSTACLE TO COOPERATION AMONG THE
NATIONALISTS IN THE PAST.

3. COMMENT: BOTSWANANS MAY HAVE BEEN SLIGHTLY
EMBARRASSED BY ARRANGEMENTS MADE BY BRITISH TO MEET
MUZOREWA IN GABORONE. IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE FOR US TO
BRIEF PRESIDENT KHAMA WHO LEFT TOWN SHORTLY AFTER OUR
ARRIVAL FOR PREVIOUSLY PLANNED WEEKEND AT HIS HOME
UP COUNTRY. BELIEVE, HOWEVER, CONVERSATION WITH
MOGWE SERVED TO ALLAY MOST OF THEIR CONCERN. WE
STRESSED THAT GABORONE WAS FIRST CAPITAL ALONG ROUTE
OF CONSULTATIONS AND THAT WE INTENDED TO KEEP THE GOB
INFORMED OF OUR PROGRESS AS WE WENT ALONG. THEY
APPEAR TO BE PINNING SOME HOPE ON POSSIBILITY OF
SUCCESS AND ARE PERHAPS THE MOST SYMPATHETIC OF THE
FRONTLINE GOVERNMENTS. THEY ARE ALSO REALISTIC AND
AWARE OF THE OBSTACLES.
NORLAND

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